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ABSTRACT

Intercollegiate forensics has been shown to provide extensive added value to its participants regardless of whether the student stresses debate, individual events, or both. Of the individual event genres, only the limited preparation events have not been distinguished by their content goals. Most textbooks consider impromptu and extemporaneous speaking events to be synonymous. Fostering the literal/metaphorical distinction, however, would serve to magnify the different practical applications of offering both events instead of just one or the other. Three ways to make such a distinction are to: (1) distinguish metaphorical analysis from literal analysis; (2) outline the types of benefits a student should accrue from the metaphorical analysis ideally required of impromptu speaking, providing practical applications of these skills in the here-and-now world; and (3) outline the types of benefits a student should accrue from the literal analysis ideally required of extemporaneous speaking, providing practical applications of these skills in the here-and-now world. Understanding the benefits students would gain by participating in both events could not only help the communication discipline better explain the difference between events, but also to meet the standard of accountability by becoming better able to justify offering both events. In addition, there are many unique benefits to the students' understanding of their thought processes, language use, and rhetorical theory, as well as practical applications of each event that would stem from the full development and implementation of the literal/metaphoric distinction. (Twenty-five references are attached.) (PRA)

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EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING AND IMPROMPTU SPEAKING: A SYSTEM FOR DIFFERENTIATING BENEFITS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Paper presented to the

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EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING AND IMPROMPTU SPEAKING:

A SYSTEM FOR DIFFERENTIATING BENEFITS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

For the past decade, researchers in forensics have claimed that the activity has entered the age of accountability. As government budgets decrease, the recession places downward pressure on private contributions to universities, and as the job market becomes more and more competitive, consumers of education demand increasingly that educational activities result in some added value to the participants. Moreover, students have little time to engage in repetitive educational activities that do little to add to their value as skilled employees and citizens, while businesses and government stress efficiency--not duplication--in all aspects of the educational system.

In most areas, intercollegiate forensics has been shown to provide extensive added value to its participants, regardless of whether the student stresses debate (e.g, Dauber, 1989; Schneider, 1984; Ziegelmueller, 1991), individual events (e.g., Sellnow & Ziegelmueller, 1989; Karns & Schnoor, 1989), or both (e.g., Littlefield, 1985; Sorenson, 1983; Stepp & Thompson, 1988). According to the latest edition of the *Intercollegiate Speech Tournament Results* (Hawkins, 1991), the greatest number tournaments offer the reasonable number of 10 individual events--events that for the most part require different skills (p. 35). These ten events (designated "usual ie's" by the *AFA Calendar*) break down into three discrete categories: four distinct interpretation events (dramatic interpretation, prose interpretation, poetry interpretation, and duo interpretation) which require different skills in terms of cutting, narration, transitions, understandings of literature, and/or coordination with a partner; four distinct original prepared events (communication analysis, informative [expository] speaking, persuasive speaking [public address], and after dinner speaking) which require the students to pursue distinct goals in speech preparation; and two limited preparation events, which differ mainly in time allowed to prepare the speech.

Of the different event genres, only the limited preparation events have not been distinguished by their content-goals. Textbooks often use these two terms interchangeably, and forensics research (e.g., Harris, 1986; Preston, 1983, 1989, 1990a) has suggested that judging feedback encourages students to pursue the same goals when participating in either event. As Harte, Keefe, and Derryberry (1988) noted,

"impromptu has come to be considered synonymously with extemporaneous speaking, as off-the-cuff" (p. 8). Dean (1988) added that this lack of added value is detrimental to these two events.

Preston (1990b) suggested that in order to clarify these speech genres, the purposes in content, as well as the time limits, of each limited preparation event should be defined distinctly. To this end, the investigator suggested ways that in addition to utilizing coaching practices currently in the literature, changing the rules at the national tournaments plus altering judging practices could help distinguish between these events. Specifically, the results suggested that while the extemporaneous speaker should seek to answer **literally** a significant question about current events, the impromptu speaker should strive for an insightful, **metaphorical** analysis, and provided some suggestions as to how the forensics community should promote such a distinction.

Whereas Preston (1990b) focused on what the forensics community should do to "expedite, by whatever means necessary, steps to differentiate these events" (p. 23), the present study outlines how fostering the literal/metaphorical distinction magnifies the different practical applications of offering both events instead of just one or the other. In order to do so, the paper a) distinguishes metaphorical analysis from literal analysis; b) outlines the types of benefits a student should accrue from the metaphorical analysis ideally required of impromptu speaking, providing practical applications of these skills in the here-and-now world; and c) outlines the types of benefits a student should accrue from the literal analysis ideally required of extemporaneous speaking, providing practical applications of these skills in the here-and-now world. Although this paper cannot and does not desire to make these events entirely discreet in every respect, it does extend the argument for differentiating the events by illustrating the added value a student would gain by participating in both, should they be differentated as suggested in previous studies. My argument is that understanding these benefits could not only help the communication discipline better explain the difference between the events, but also to meet the standard of accountability by becoming better able to justify offering both events.

Distinguishing Metaphorical from Literal Analysis

With regards to differentiating the substance of impromptu speeches from extemporaneous speeches, metaphoric analysis can be defined as providing an **indirect** response to a question by treating the topic as a metaphor for a here-and-now situation. For example, impromptu speakers responding to the maxim, "You aim for the palace and get drowned in the sewer," would not be very effective in either inventing or delivering an impromptu speech if they discussed real sewers and palaces; rather, they would interpret the resolution (on which the student may speak concretely about topics ranging from bad luck, success in various situations, or risk-taking), and then take a stand on the topic. In extemporaneous speaking, on the other hand, the speaker ideally would be required to provide a **direct** answer to a question. For example, a good extemporaneous question would ask a speaker to respond specifically to a current events question, such as, "What vested interests shaped Bush's actions against Iraq in Operation Desert Storm?" In the best of worlds, the extemporaneous speaker would have to provide a direct answer to this question, supporting with substantial logical proofs claims about the real Presidents and the real Iraqis.

In her essay on the development of metaphoric rhetorical criticism, Foss (1989) outlines the concept of metaphor in a way that should inform the participant, coach, and critic of impromptu speaking (pp. 187-196). Understanding how the concept has developed over time bolsters the present study's framework for differentiation in three ways: a) by grounding the differentiation in the traditions and study of rhetorical criticism; b) by providing a communication-based means of defining the events; and c) by enabling the impromptu speaking scholar to isolate what elements of metaphor distinguish one event from the other.

Foss (1989) notes that traditionally, Aristotle viewed metaphor as decoration or embellishment--a decoration that could be used in any of the ten standard individual events. "Metaphor is the transference of a name from the object to which it has a natural application," said Aristotle (p. 187). Tradition at times viewed metaphor as a deviant or even deceptive form of speech. In his *Poetics*, Foss notes,

Aristotle held that metaphors "create an unusual element in the diction by their not being in ordinary speech" (p. 187). She further notes that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Thomas Hobbes "considered metaphor to be one of four abuses of speech because we 'deceive others' when we use metaphor" (p. 187).

Hobbes' and Aristotle's objections ring very familiar to many impromptu coaches whose students ask, "Isn't giving the impression that I know more than I do about this topic deceptive?" or "Isn't this 'organized b.s.' nothing but skirting the question?" Indeed, such objections may well apply if we only view metaphor as an embellishment. As well, this traditional usage of the term metaphor does not really distinguish speech events; extemporaneous speakers, in fact, often use indirect comparisons to attract attention in their introductions. Foss (1989), then, provides a more useful definition:

> Metaphor is a basic way by which the process of using symbols to know reality occurs. Whatever language we select as the means through which to view reality, it treats that portion of reality *as* something, thus creating it and making it an object of experience for us. Reality, then, is simply the world seen from a particular description of language; it is whatever we describe it *as*. Whatever vocabulary of language we use to descibe reality is a metaphor because it enables us to see reality *as* something. Phenomena in the world become objects of reality or knowledge only because of the symbols/metaphors that make them accessable to us (p. 188).

Such a conception of metaphor enables the student to think up and then discuss objects of experience, and use those objects in illuminating whether or not a topic provides a metaphor for those experiences. In this fashion, metaphors for both the topic and treatment thereof can be approached as those which enable the student to make their world accessable to the audience in an interesting fashion. Burke (1945/1969) explains how the process generates the discovery of ideas (pp. 503-504), thereby reinforcing the notion that metaphor can unleash the thought process that enables many students to overcome the blocks that often prevent them from mastering the impromptu event.

The effective impromptu speaker not only acquires skill in preparing areas to discuss, but in expressing ideas just as those ideas come into consciousness. In the one or two minutes of preparation time, the most a student can hope to do is to decide which stand to take on the topic, and a few main points to address the topic. In impromptu, diction and word choice occurs while the student thinks. Here, Richards' (1936) discussion of thought as metaphors applies (p. 94). As Foss (1989) notes, Richards "saw metaphor as 'a borrowing between and intercourse of *thoughts*, a transaction between contexts.' Thus, metaphor is an omnipresent principle of thought and language: '*Thought* is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom'" (p. 188). In no other event does speaking follow thought so quickly as it does impromptu speaking. Thus, the following example provided by Foss might also work well in approaching an impromptu topic such as, "A fool and his or her money are soon parted":

> The metaphor that "time is money" demonstrates in more concrete terms how the use of a particular metaphor can affect our thought and experience of reality. This metaphor, reflected in common expressions in our culture such as, "This gadget will *save* you hours," "I've *invested* a lot of time in her," and "You need to *budget* your time," has led us to experience the reality of time in a particular way. Because we conceive of time as money, we understand and experience it as something that can be spent, budgeted, wasted, and saved. Telephone message units, hotel-room rates, yearly budgets, and interest on loans are examples of how time is money (p. 189).

As Foss states, "By organizing reality in particular ways, our selected metaphors also prescribe how we are to act. Metaphors contain implicit assumptions, point of view, and evaluations" (p. 189). By viewing impromptu speaking as metaphor, then, the student can in a unique way ponder their assumptions about various elements of life related to a topic, their points of views, and, importantly, the sense of evaluation so necessary in taking a clear stand on an impromptu topic. Thus, metaphor when viewed as a means to unleash an explanation of reality can enable the student to unpack the impromptu topic by

discussing experiences familiar to the individual.

Two more examples illustrate how metaphor can aid the impromptu speaker unpack a topic. On the topic, "I'm older now, but still running against the wind," metaphor enables the student to first think of many possible **interpretations** of the quotation--interpretations ranging from being stubborn ("the topic reflects how we don't learn from our lessons") to fighting the odds as an underdog ("the topic reflects the courage of those who fight all odds--the poor, the physically challenged, and the child of a broken home"), to fighting to the death for just but at-the-time unpopular political causes ("the topic brings to light memories of many--Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth--who sacrificed everything for the cause of the oppressed"). Whatever interpretation the student makes, only metaphor can enable the student to take a topic nearly impossible to address literally and produce a memorable, concrete speech in an area of the speaker's expertise in only a few minutes.

The short topic like, "Haste makes waste," further illustrates the indispensibility of metaphor in shaping the audience's perceptions of reality. Here, a student can disagree, using instances where meeting deadlines as instances where being quick is a necessity. Journalism majors might find their trade an excellent metaphor for opposing the topic--or, conversely, demonstrate concretely with war stories how the topic provides an inappropriate metaphor for their profession. On the other hand, a budding novelist or artist might find the topic a more appropriate metaphor for their profession. Even though such a short topic might seem to call for literal analysis (like just being in a hurry, in general), the metaphoric treatment, again, enables the student to provide a richer, more concrete impromptu speech.

Foss (1989) notes that a metaphor has two parts--a **tenor**, or focal subject, and a **vehicle**, or frame for explaining the subject. For example, consider the statement, "He is an animal." Here, "he" is the tenor, and "animal" provides the vehicle. Of course, one must explain the context to clarify the metaphor--for example, if the context is the social scene, then the man is a **party** animal; if it is the job, then perhaps the metaphor points up that the man is **workaholic**. In either case, metaphor forces the speaker to consider the context in impromptu speaking. In our above examples, the topic may be viewed

as either tenor or vehicle--either way, metaphor by unleashing the explanations of many possible thoughts provides a uniquely beneficial approach to impromptu speaking.

Petrello (1990) has noted the need for impromptu speaking to involve argumentative sophistication. Metaphoric treatment provides argumentative sophication uniquely suited to this event. Foss (1989) explains:

> In the new understanding of metaphor, in contrast, metaphor serves an argumentative function in a very basic way: metaphor constitutes argument. Metaphor does not simply provide support to an argument; the structure of the metaphor itself argues. It explicates the appropriateness of associated characteristics of the vehicle to those of the tenor and invites auditors to adopt the resulting perspective. . .A metaphor, then, argues just as typical argumentative structures do, but it usually does so more efficiently and comprehensively (pp. 190-191).

Hence, metaphor distinguishes impromptu speaking from extemporaneous speaking by enabling the speaker to: a) take an argumentative stand on a topic; b) decide on a stand quickly to accomodate the rigid time limits; and c) address the topic more concretely and comprehensively by realizing that unlike extemporaneous speaking, no literal answer supported by proofs and research in the traditional vein is necessary; proofs from the speaker's areas of expertise should suffice.

So what is to be said for the literal analysis we associate with extemporaneous speaking? Extemporaneous speaking lends itself to more traditional macroscopic means of interpretation and support, since in this event, the use of logical proofs becomes essential to addressing a topic. Whether or not extemporaneous speaking achieves the desirable goal of tournament directors offering focused topics consistently as suggested by previous research (e.g., Aden & Kay, 1988; Preston, 1990b), a literal approach would ask our students to pursue five objectives in approaching extemporaneous speaking: a) learning to conduct research on contemporary issues more thoroughly; b) learning how to organize the information gathered such that they have quick access in the still-rigid 30-minute preparation period to the proofs expected in the event; c) learning how to address policy issues directly; d) learning how to use

metaphors and other figures as support, in the traditional sense, when necessary to attract audience attention and to embellish a speech; and e) learning the political agenda of the day.

Overall, then, metaphor provides a method whereby the student can come to understand a healthy distinction between impromptu and extemporaneous speaking. This is not to say that literal supports should be totally absent from impromptu speaking--in fact, the use of metaphor as noted above provides a conduit to which the students gains quick access to concrete examples to support the main points. Nor do I claim that metaphor should be entirely absent from extemporaneous speaking--in fact, Foss's conception of metaphor dictates that it permeates the language of all of the events. As well, I do not deny that events share some skills--after all, they all do fall under "forensics," itself a subclassification of the academic discipline "communication." However, metaphor should provide the central distinction in the content focus of impromptu and extemporaneous speaking. The remainder of the present essay outlines how a distinctive focus augments the added value of each event.

Benefits from Metaphoric Analysis in Impromptu Speaking

Students acquire four benefits unique to participation in impromptu speaking by employing metaphor as an approach to this event: a) their thoughts become more easily accessible if they develop a set of metaphorical topoi in preparing for various types of topics; b) they learn how language shapes our conception of reality and response to reality; c) they become better scholars of rhetorical theory; and d) they acquire a greater understanding of how to act on a rhetorical view of reality.

Boone (1987) has developed a set of metaphorical topoi whereby students can list areas of expertise for use in many types of impromptu topics (pp. 39-47). Likewise, the expanded thought process drills developed by Reynolds & Fay (1987) are metaphorical in nature, encouraging the student to think beyond the limits of a topic taken literally. When students have thought of these areas of expertise and have discussed them with their coaches and teamates, concrete examples otherwise unavailable become available to the student competing in this event. Students can transfer these skills to situations that require a short time to gather ones thoughts, but where thoughts can come quickly if approached

metaphorically. Examples would include meetings, interviews, and day-do-day conversations. As well, exercises designed to enhance metaphoric analysis promote a deeper understanding of self--an understanding useful in some very important life decisions, such as career, lifestyle, marriage, and family.

The metaphoric approach to impromptu speaking can enable the event to afford the student a unique means of understanding how language shapes reality. Contestants must consider how their thoughts shape the thoughts of others, and, again, transfer this skill to day to day impromptu-type conversations where, on the spur of the moment, they must both respond to others' thoughts as well as shape those thoughts to an extent. Metaphoric analysis also draws the students to the notions that others use metaphor to shape reality, and that understanding how metaphor works in others would help the students to adapt in here-and-now situations. As well, metaphor enables students to understand better how their symbolic reality relates to the symbolic reality of others, and how to adapt to this exigence quickly and efficiently in order to communicate effectively.

Because the metaphoric approach is grounded in rhetorical theory, the students by taking this approach to impromptu speaking receive a valuable introduction to rhetorical theory. By gaining this understanding, the student can benefit in ways ranging from applying metaphor as a technique in a rhetorical criticism speech, to gaining an entry into the communication discipline as a possible career, and to gaining a greater understanding of the history of rhetoric by studying the history of the development of the term "metaphor" (Ivie, 1986; Osborn, 1967). While learning rhetorical theory seems discipline specific, many spinoffs both within and without of the discipline may occur as this background in metaphor theory might spark student interest in a variety of topics, including literary criticism, political discourse, or legal argument.

As Foss (1989) states, "By organizing reality in particular ways, our selected metaphors also prescribe how we are to act. Metaphors contain implicit assumptions, points of view, and evaluations" (p. 189). Hence, such an approach would enhance a student's understanding of how interpretations of

reality lead to action. In gaining such understandings, students could better come to grips with their own assumptions, their own points of view, and their own evaluations of various phenomena that lead to action. Such knowledge would not only enable a student to better develop means of reacting to the language and actions of others, but would enable them to evaluate introspectively how their own off-the-cuff interpretations lead to action. Thus, impromptu speaking can enable the student to become more pro-active: not only in contests, not only in class participation, but also in society, whether impromptu communication relates to family, to career choice, to work, or to citizenship in the political arena (ranging from voting to actually running for office, as some forensic students do).

The Benefits of Literal Analysis in Extemporaneous Speaking

Students acquire four benefits unique to participation in extemporaneous through the practice of providing literal answers to focused questions: a) they learn valuable research skills; b) they develop argumentative skills specific to policy issues facing today's leaders and tomorrow's future leaders (often, the student); c) they acquire factual knowledge about history, political science, and current events; and d) they become better able to cope with reality by understanding events taking place in today's world. Unlike the original prepared events where the student conveys memorized information on a chosen topic, requiring literal analysis in extemporaneous speaking forces the student to also become conversant on a wide range of national and international issues of the day.

Learning research skills affords the student several layers of benefits. First, to prepare thoroughly for extemporaneous speaking, a student must develop research skills such as those required in both policy (NDT) and quasipolicy (CEDA) debate. For a non-debater, extemporaneous speaker can provide an effective introduction to the research needed for debate; for a debater, literal analysis can augment research skills already gained, as well as provide knowledge of the many issues that might possibly be linked to a resolution. Second, the general knowledge gained from research can provide the students with ideas for term papers in various classes, as well as sharpen the skills necessary to do the research in those classes. Most importantly, learning the care in research necessary to address a topic

directly can enable the student to form sound habits should they choose a career in specialized fields such as medicine, accounting, academics, or law. The attention to detail thorough research requires, then, could provide a skill the student might use over the course of a life.

Sound research skills lead provide a foundation for another benefit of literal analysis--the ability to support an argument through traditional, logical proofs. Literal analysis requires that a student understand how, say, a major premise, a minor premise, and conclusion must all be proven before a unit of deductive argument can be proven true. Evidence must be required. As long as critics stick to this requirement, then, extemporaneous speaking can enable students to better understand the traditional notions of logic still central to our society.

The understanding of current events afforded by literal analysis encourages the participant to develop habits that enable them to understand central social, economic, religious, popular, and political trends. This understanding enables students to better make at least four types of decisions they will all face in later life: a) understanding how current events shape business and investment opportunities; b) understanding the need to keep up with **current** information related to the law--an understanding not only useful for business, like liability laws, but for a possible future career in the legal profession; c) understanding the circumstances both favorable and unfavorable to making a career choice; and d) understanding the specific facts that go into effective citizenship, like where to find facts on which to cast a vote in an election. Although this specific understanding of current events leads to benefits in some of the same areas as understanding how to act by participating in impromptu speaking, the **type** of information provided in these areas leads to different and complementary benefits.

Finally, whereas the metaphoric analysis afforded by the ideal impromptu event provides a way to understand how language as metaphor leads to interpretation and action, the literal analysis afforded by the ideal extemporaneous event enables the students to conduct a reality test for those actions. Whereas the impromptu event would thereby promote creativity, the extemporaneous event would promote a realistic appraisal how how a creative idea would operate, if at all, in practice.

Conclusion

Recent studies have shown clearly that as currently practiced, students receive little incremental value by participating in both limited preparation events, aside from the ability to "speak off the cuff" which can be learned from either event. Coaches, participants, and researchers also note that in order to differentiate the events, there must be some difference other than varying time limits. Utilizing studies by Aden and Kay (1988), Boone (1987), and Reynolds and Fay (1987), Preston (1990b) noted how rules changes (addressing mainly topic wording), altering judging practices, and maintaining and integrating some of the coaching practices outlined in the literature could promote the literal/metaphoric distinction between extemporaneous and impromptu speaking. The current essay extends on the latter study by outlining more fully the how concept of metaphor can distinguish the events by their content-goals. Finally, the essay outlines unique benefits and practical applications of each event that would stem from the full development and implementation of the literal/metaphoric distinction.

Whereas no study can or should make any of the events lumped into the genre "competitive forensics" totally discreet, this study has provided a framework to justify the two events where scholars most often complain about the lack of distinction. It is hoped that the current essay will spur further discussion over the future of the limited preparation events, and that research into how tournament directors and judges treat each event continue with longitudinal studies of the coaching practices, judging practices, and rules that shape their development.

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